



**SE** OnLine  
**HD** **Study says climate change worse than thought**

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**LP**

Scientists say the world's climate is warming faster than feared because previous predictions were too "optimistic" and overestimated the cooling impact of clouds.

As the planet marked its fourth hottest year on record, an Australian-led study published in the journal Nature found increasing levels of carbon dioxide would lead to thinner ocean clouds and reduce their cooling impact, causing temperature rises of at least 3 C over the course of the century.

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The team of scientists said the findings showed some climate models had been too "optimistic" and previous estimates of a minimum temperature rise of only 1.5 C could now be discounted. The optimistic models did not properly assess the impact of water evaporation, which sometimes rose only a short distance into the atmosphere and caused updrafts that reduced cloud cover, the study found.

"These models have been predicting a lower climate sensitivity, but we believe they're incorrect," Steven Sherwood, a professor at the University of New South Wales, told The Sydney Morning Herald.

"The net effect of (climate change) is you have less cloud cover."

The study comes amid a controversy in Australia over claims by Maurice Newman - the leading business adviser to Prime Minister Tony Abbott - who said the world had been taken "hostage to climate change madness."

Newman said the climatechange establishment, led by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, remained "intent on exploiting the masses and extracting more money."

"The scientific delusion, the religion behind the climate crusade, is crumbling," he wrote in The Australian. "Global temperatures have gone nowhere for 17 years ... If the IPCC were your financial adviser, you would have sacked it long ago."

Newman, a former chairman of the Australian Stock Exchange, was criticized by the opposition and pilloried by scientists, who said he was expressing "flat Earth" views and should be dismissed.

"His piece is a mix of common climate-change myths, misinformation and ideology," David Karoly, from the University of Melbourne, said in an article in The Sydney Morning Herald. "It is clearly not sensible to have a person who believes that climate change science is a delusion as leader of the prime minister's Business Advisory Council."

The debate comes as Australia in 2013 marked its hottest year since reliable recordings began in 1910. The world's driest continent also recorded its hottest day, hottest month, hottest winter's day and hottest summer. Globally, according to figures from the United States National Climatic Data Centre, 2013 was due to be the fourth hottest year in 134 years of records behind 2010, 2005 and 1998.

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